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SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
Relating to the carrying on
The Linnen Manufacture
IN THE
Kingdom of IRELAND,
BY A
Joint-Stock.

R Cary (John)

CONFIDENTIAL

Report to

The Lincoln Memorial

Report of the

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SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
Relating to
The Linnen Manufacture
IN THE
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THE Linnen Manufacture in *Ireland*, being a Subject so much discours'd of the last Sessions of Parliament, I humbly presume to offer some Thoughts how it may best be carried on.

But before I enter upon it, I will consider the State of that Kingdom, with respect to its Foreign Trade; the Ballance whereof I take to be against them, and must therefore be supplied by carrying out their Coin, which is already grown so scarce, that 'tis to be fear'd in a short time there will be little left.

To explain this, I will lay down some of those Steps, by which the Ballance of Trade, daily alters to their Prejudice.

Ist, The great fall of their Products, *viz.* Wool, Tallow, Hides, Beef, &c. which are abated in their Prices above one Third of what they yielded before the War; so that should the same Quantities of those Commodities be bought up for Exportation as formerly there were, yet they would not amount to the Value they then did.

II^{ly}, The Ports of *Spain, France and Flanders*, which were their Great Markets, being now shut against them, the Profits which they made by their Foreign Trade in the times of Peace, over and above the first value of the Commodities exported, are also lost to the Kingdom.

III^{ly}, The Prohibiting the Exportation of their Wollen Manufactures, whereby their People were employed, and their Labours sold to Foreign Nations, hath very much lessened the Ballance of their Foreign Trade.

IV^{ly}, The great Sums of Money spent in this Kingdom by the Nobility and Gentry of *Ireland*, who come over hither for Pleasure, or necessary Attendances on the Court, Parliament, or private Affairs, and send hi-

ther their Children for Education; the Purchases they have lately made of the Forfeited Estates; and the yearly Remittances thence for the Rents of Lands belonging to the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom, do all make against them.

Vly, The great Consumption of Commodities among them from this Kingdom, which, tho' it encreases our Trade, and makes it our Interest to support that Kingdom, must be allowed to be a Prejudice to them.

All which being laid together, it seems apparent to me, that the Ballance of their Trade must every Year grow more against them, till their Mony is drawn away, except some new Manufacture, fit for Exportation, be encouraged amongst them.

And I think none more proper than that of Linnen; which, besides the Employment it will give to their Poor, will also take up large Tracts of Land for raising of Hemp and Flax; and being a Manufacture no way interfering with our own, we may take it from them in Barter for what they have hence, without any manner of Prejudice to the Trade of this King-

Besides, The People of *Ireland*, being employed on the Linnen Manufacture, would by degrees be taken off from making so much Worsted and Woollen Yarn as now they do, which they send hither at cheaper Rates than we are able to make 'em; The Price of Labour in all Places being according to the Prices of Provisions, and those according to the Rents of Lands, the Poor can afford to work there on lower Terms than it can be expected they shou'd do here; on the other side, if the low Labour of the Poor of *Ireland* was employed on Spinning of Linnen Yarn, it would be an Advantage to the Kingdom of *England* to have it sent hither, because it would enable us to make our Fustions, and other Manufactures wherein it is used, cheaper than now we do; whilst our own Poor might be employed on spinning of Wool; and we might afford to give them better Wages, without fear of being beat out of our Manufactures by any other Nation, provided Care was taken to keep our Wool at Home.

The next thing to be considered is, how this Work may be best carried on; which I am of Opinion must be done by a Corporation

ration with a Joint-Stock, sufficient, not only to buy up what Linnens shall be made, but also to furnish the Kingdom with Money on easy Terms; which will likewise encourage the raising of Hemp and Flax.

If the high Rates of Interest in *Ireland* be considered, and the present State of the Linnen Manufacture there, 'twill not be difficult to see, how unlikely it is to be carried on by private Stocks, who can make *Ten per Cent. per Annum*, by letting out their Money; 'tis true, the late Act hath reduced it to Eight, but that Act having no regard to Incumbrances entered into before the 25th of *March, 1704*; I do not see how it will much help the People of *Ireland* at this time, when the Scarcity of Money does disable them to discharge prior Engagements; so that private Men have Opportunities enough to settle theirs at *Ten per Cent.*, which in all probability they will rather chuse, than to lay it out in Linnens, unless they can be assured of a far greater Profit, than they can make by letting it out.

Besides, As Interest is now managed, 'tis both a Clog to the Gentlemen's Estates, and a Discouragement to Traders and

Manufacturers, considering that the whole Sum borrowed must be paid in at once ; by which means, being got into the Usurer's Books, they can scarce ever find the way out ; now if the Borrower had Liberty to pay in the Principle, by such Parts as he is able to raise it, and the Interest for so much to cease from that time, this would encourage Industry, and promote Improvements, both in Product and Manufactures, which are the two things that encrease the Wealth of a Nation.

An Infant-Manufacture must be carried on at a small Profit, and must as I may say fight its way through ; which cannot be done, where Interest carries such a Load with it ; and therefore I am of Opinion, that nothing less than a Joynt Stock can make *Ireland* flourish ; which will in the Consequence turn likewise to the Advantage of *England* ; the Gentlemen of *Ireland*, being by these Means made more easy in their Circumstances, and having their former Incumbrances brought lower, will spend more of their Mony here, and wear more of our Manufactures there.

Nor will this way of lending out Mony be any disadvantage to a Corporation, who will find fit Opportunities of employing their Stock, as fast as it is paid in :

and the Profits thereof being returned hither in Linnens, they may afford to sell them cheaper, than Private Stocks can do.

But I do not think this Work can be presently brought about; 'twill not be easy to perswade the Landlords nor Tenants of *Ireland* to leave off the way of Husbandry they are now upon, and to turn their Lands to Hemp and Flax, till they see some Encouragement; but when they shall find this new Product bring ready Mony, they will soon set upon it; if the Manufacturer receives ready Mony for his Cloath, he will be able to pay ready Mony both for Materials and Labour, which circulation will encourage both the Farmer and the Manufacturer; and by Degrees, Hemp and Flaxseed will be sowed in all Lands proper for them, and the Owners will soon see the difference, between raising Commodities for which there is a present demand, and such as lye on their Hands; for though *Ireland* may in time produce greater Quantities of Hemp and Flax than they can work up, yet not more than *England* may take off, without Prejudice to any Foreign Trade we drive; and their Number of Hands will in all probability be encreased by the *French* Refugees, who will be glad

to go thither, where they may be employed in a Manufacture so natural to them as Linnen is ; which will also give a fatal Blow to the Kingdom of *France* in that Manufacture.

The People in the North of *Ireland* make good Cloath, sell it at reasonable Rates, and wou'd every Year make much more, had they a Vent for it ; And it is to be observed, that Mony is not Plentier, nor Rents paid better, in any part of *Ireland*, than there.

The Rents of *Ireland* grow due at two Times of Payment, viz. 1st of *May*, and 1st of *November* ; the first becomes payable whilst their Cattle are Lean, which puts the Tenants under great Straits, and forces them to sell very low, if they are prest for Mony ; but the second Payment is more easily made, their Fat Cattle being sold, and their Harvest over ; This is the State of that part of the Kingdom that depends on Feeding and Tillage ; but where the Linnen Manufacture is, the Tenants are much easier ; they Spin in the Winter Nights, and at other leisure times, which being wove into Cloath, and whiten'd early in the Year, provides Mony for their first Payment, without selling their Cattle before fatted for a Mar-

It is necessary for a new undertaking to be attended with some lucky Accident ; the Linnen Manufacture can never be begun in *Ireland* at a more seasonable time than now, being imported hither Custom free, when all the other Linnens of *Europe* pay considerable Duties.

The Gentlemen of *Ireland* at this time seem to be Discontented, they find themselves uneasy, but cannot tell where the sore lies ; therefore, sometimes they complain of one thing, and sometimes of another ; but the true ground of all is this ; Their Exports are lessened, whilst their Imports encrease upon them, and the Specie of their Mony decreases every Day ; by which means their Rents come in slowly, their Products fall on their Hands, and will more, as they encrease above their Expence ; so that their Improvements rather turn to their Disadvantage ; and their Lands must fall (which 'tis our Interest to keep up) unless some new Product be encouraged, which may be Manufactured amongst them ; If this was done, They would soon see where their Interest lay ; and tho' I do not believe they would all fall on sowing Hemp and Flax, nor is it necessary they should, yet there would be so much Land turn'd that way, as

might restrain their other Products, within the compass of their Exports, and Home Consumption, and cause a Circulation of Mony through all parts of the Kingdom.

This will give a greater employment to the Poor of *Ireland*, and encourage People to settle among them, without any manner of Prejudice to *England*; and create a mutual Friendship, and a profitable Correspondence, between both Kingdoms.

And as the Establishing such a Fund will be an Advantage to that Kingdom, so it will bring a considerable Profit to the Undertakers, besides the Benefit which may arise from it to the Government, during the continuance of this War.

London, July
18th, 1704.

JO. CARY.